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# **Colorado's Water Future: *A Communications Roadmap for Enhancing the Value of Water***

Developed by GBSM, Inc.  
for the Colorado Water Conservation Board

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## SECTION I

### Introduction and Overview

The water landscape in Colorado is changing. The developments of the last 10 years will likely mark this as one of the more significant decades in Colorado's water history.

- The drought of 2002-2003 left an indelible mark on the Colorado consciousness.
- We learned more about Colorado's existing and future water supply and demand than we've ever known before as a result of the landmark Statewide Water Supply Initiative (SWSI).
- The Colorado Water for the 21st Century Act was enacted, institutionalizing for the first time a forum for dialogue and cooperation among Colorado's water basins.
- Water conservation efforts were enhanced and became a more accepted and institutionalized reality for many Coloradans and their water providers.
- Colorado transitioned from the post-Two Forks era, where few major projects were undertaken, to an era of infrastructure investment where new water supply projects are being pursued across the state. Prairie Waters, the Southern Delivery System, the Northern Integrated Supply Project and the Moffat expansion project are just a few examples.

The next decade looks to be equally significant. The Governor has called for the development of a statewide water plan in the next five years. An unprecedented era of cooperation has begun with the recent announcement of the Colorado River Cooperative Agreement by Denver Water and the West Slope, and it could soon be followed by a similar agreement with the Northern Water Conservancy District. Pressures on water supply will continue with population growth, accelerated transfers of agricultural water, climate uncertainties and other factors. As a result, the competition for the various uses of water will continue and intensify.

It is in that context that the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) has embarked upon an effort to develop a statewide communications plan about the value of water. The goal of this plan is to *raise awareness* among all Coloradans of the value and importance of water. The plan aims to elevate public consciousness about water in Colorado. Coloradans must recognize the varied uses of this resource, its importance and why it is so precious to our state, our environment and our quality of life. The value of water must be instilled in their daily lives and thinking so that it becomes ingrained as an intrinsic value.

This will not be an action-oriented plan. It will not ask Coloradans to conserve water, or to support new storage projects, or to take any other specific action. Those actions and others, however, could well be an outcome of this plan. If water becomes an intrinsic value in the lives of Coloradans, it is likely that this will lead to a variety of actions and behavioral changes (enhanced conservation, for example). Yet it will not be CWCB asking for the action; rather that call to action will come from the various water interests (providers, environmental groups, others). This plan will provide a foundation of awareness that will help those water interests to be even more successful in their calls to action. By elevating Coloradans' consciousness about

the value and importance of water, they will be more receptive to the pleas from providers to conserve, from the environmental community to protect and from the agricultural community to preserve, thus benefiting the entire state and all its varied water stakeholders.

The time is ripe for a statewide water communications plan, not only because of the factors noted above, but also because:

- The year 2012 is a milestone when events will be held across the state under the umbrella of Colorado Water 2012 to celebrate Colorado's water, its uses and its value.
- We will soon begin to see the implementation of the SWSI 2010 recommendations, including helping to determine the appropriate portfolio of solutions to a secure water future, the evaluation of projects to develop new supplies and other tasks.
- The water community believes that enhancing Coloradans' appreciation of water is needed and that the time is right for such an endeavor.

Our research of other water communications efforts found that a statewide water communications program of this nature is unique for Colorado. Other water communications programs have focused on specific calls to action such as conservation. To the extent there have been other state-driven, statewide communications programs, they seem to have focused on distinct public health-related calls to action (e.g., smoking or the seat belt campaign). One might point to recent campaigns by the oil and gas industry to promote a positive image of these resources, but those were sponsored by industry and not driven from a public interest perspective.

Because this is a new direction for Colorado, it is important that it be done right. That means that it must be pursued strategically and incrementally. The state should not dive immediately into implementing the full plan but should instead first make sure that the foundation for this plan is established and clear. There are certain issues that need consideration at the outset as they will affect the future direction of the campaign in fundamental ways.

This report lays out a path forward, beginning with those initial decision points and action items and leading to full-blown implementation of the plan with a specific list of tactics. Because the budget that will be available is unknown, the plan also provides a scalable approach that includes tactics tailored to fit various budget levels. The starting point for this plan, however, is to establish what we know about Coloradans' existing perspectives on water and water-related issues and what has worked and not worked with other water communications efforts.

## SECTION II

### Approach and Research Results

Research played an important role in the development of this plan. This included analyzing previously completed surveys that studied public perceptions on water-related issues and evaluating other relevant water awareness campaigns, both within Colorado and across the country.

The input of the Value of Water Subcommittee and other key stakeholders also played an important role in the development of this plan. Their input was gathered through group meetings, one-on-one conversations, and a survey asking their perspectives on a variety of water issues, including Coloradans' perceptions on water, the most effective communications tactics that should be utilized, and ways that the plan could be of greatest benefit to them or their organization's goals. The list of Subcommittee members and other key stakeholders who were asked to participate in our research is attached as Appendix A.

The results of this research and stakeholder input are provided below.

### Key Findings from Other Water Surveys

Thirteen surveys that probed awareness and perceptions on water issues were reviewed, many of which were recommended by Subcommittee members. These surveys covered a wide range of topics ranging from water quality and conservation to general attitudes on water. Only one survey was found that specifically analyzed the degree to which the public values water, and it was nationwide in scope. Although the bulk of the surveys were conducted within the state of Colorado, some sampled residents from the Western United States or even across the nation. Of the thirteen surveys initially considered, eight were identified as particularly relevant for this campaign and were closely reviewed.

While helpful, it is important to note that these surveys are not a substitute for comprehensive research designed specifically for this effort. In order to accurately determine Coloradans' baseline knowledge levels and attitudes about water, it is highly recommended that a comprehensive survey of a large sample of Coloradans, coupled with focus groups, be conducted. This recommendation will be discussed in greater detail in Section III of this document. In the meantime, however, the pre-existing surveys provided several useful findings and considerations that aided in the development of this plan. The full report on these research findings, along with a list of all the surveys reviewed, is included in Appendix B.

Below are the key findings that were identified from our analysis of other relevant water surveys.

- **There is a high level of concern among Coloradans about the fragility of the environment, including having clean water, clean air, natural areas and wildlife.**  
*Source: Conservation in the West Survey: A survey of the attitudes of voters in five Western States, 2011, Public Opinions on Water Quality Issues, 2007*
- **There is evidence that many Coloradans understand that the state faces a long-term shortfall in water supply.**

*Source: Conservation in the West Survey: A survey of the attitudes of voters in five Western States, 2011; Public Perceptions, Preferences and Values for Water in the West, 2008; Colorado River Water Conservation District Survey, 2009*

- **The perspectives of Coloradans on various water issues, including future water supply, varies by age, education level, political party affiliation and geographic location.**

*Source: Colorado River Water Conservation District Survey, 2009; Denver Water Survey of Denver Latinos and African Americans, 2010*

- **There is a low level of awareness among Coloradans about where their water comes from and the varied uses of water within the state.**

*Source: Public Opinions on Water Quality Issues, 2007; Colorado River Water Conservation District Survey, 2009*

- **Coloradans recognize the importance of the state's water resources to our economic prosperity and to them personally.**

*Source: Conservation in the West Survey: A survey of the attitudes of voters in five Western States, 2011; Colorado River Water Conservation District Survey, 2009; Survey of Public Attitudes about Water Issues in Colorado, 2005*

- **Despite economic challenges, the majority of Coloradans continue to support government funding for land, water and wildlife protection.**

*Source: Conservation in the West Survey: A survey of the attitudes of voters in five Western States, 2011; Public Opinions on Water Quality Issues, 2007; Public Perceptions, Preferences and Values for Water in the West, 2008*

- **Many Coloradans are unfamiliar with basic water terms, indicating a need to communicate water issues using language that is understandable to the average person.**

*Source: Public Perceptions, Preferences and Values for Water in the West, 2008*

- **The majority of water education efforts in the state have not focused on the appreciation and value of water.**

*Source: Colorado Water Education Task Force: 2008 Water Education Survey & Focus Group Report, 2008*

- **Americans value water over any other service they receive; industrial/agricultural businesses rank it second.**

*Source: ITT Value of Water Survey: Americans on the U.S. Water Crisis, 2010*

## **Key Findings from Other Water Communications Campaigns**

A second key research component included researching other water awareness and outreach programs, both within Colorado and throughout the country, and learning from their experiences. Campaigns were identified through the recommendations of the Value of Water Subcommittee members as well as Internet searches. While more than 35 campaigns were

initially identified, this list was narrowed to the 22 campaigns that were deemed most pertinent. Research on these campaigns was conducted by reviewing campaign websites and associated materials (i.e. brochures, advertisements, PSAs, etc.). In addition, phone interviews were conducted on the campaigns that were most relevant, including one from Texas (*Water IQ*), three from California (*California Water Awareness Campaign*, *California's Water: A Crisis We Can't Ignore* and *Value of Water Campaign*), two from Colorado (*It's the Same Water* and *Value of Water Initial Framework*) and two national efforts (*Water is Life*, and *Infrastructure Makes it Happen* and *Only Tap Water Delivers*).

This research generated the following key findings.

- **The present campaign is unique in its goal and approach.**  
Water campaigns in other states and within Colorado were focused on specific issues or calls to action, such as the need to conserve, to invest in infrastructure or to reduce storm water pollution. The research found no other campaign focused on the broad goal of increasing awareness of the value of water.
- **Baseline research is crucial to the success of a campaign.**  
The experience of other states (Texas and California in particular) shows that comprehensive baseline research in the form of statewide surveys and focus groups is critical to developing highly effective messaging and branding that will produce the desired results. In an analysis of six stormwater campaigns in Colorado, Studio No 6, a Colorado-based design and branding firm, identified research as the critical first step. "The campaigns which were the most informative utilized surveys before, during and after the campaigns. Baseline measurements must be understood before embarking upon the creative." (Colorado Stormwater Campaign Study, 2008) These efforts used this research to identify the most effective messages, provide benchmarking data against which success could be measured, and create an identity that would resonate most effectively with target audiences.
- **Mass media is critical to changing the public's opinion of water.**  
Efforts with a strong strategic mass media component, including TV, radio and billboards, were found to be the most effective in moving public opinion. The North Texas Municipal Water District (for the *Water IQ Campaign*) spends \$1 to \$2 million annually on a comprehensive campaign that includes television and other paid media. California's *Save Our Water* campaign spent roughly \$1 million over three years. *California's Water: A Crisis We Can't Ignore* spent \$6.3 million over just three months.
- **Communication toolkits may be helpful but have limited effectiveness.**  
Nearly all of the campaigns developed toolkits with customizable materials such as mock bill inserts, brochures, or templates for newsletter articles. The campaigns with more limited resources relied almost entirely on toolkits while the better-funded campaigns used them in conjunction with large media components. The lesson learned was that while helpful, these toolkits were of limited use without other complementary tactics such as mass advertising. Many stakeholders (e.g., water interest groups, providers) had their own communications efforts and did not need the basic tools provided in the toolkits; the need was for something above and beyond. The toolkits were most useful to the smaller entities that did not have their own communications efforts.



- **Messages about the value of water generally fall into one of four categories: the importance of water to public health, the environment, supporting the economy or the overall quality of life.**

As previously discussed, communicating the value of water had a specific focus in other water campaigns. No campaigns were identified with an overall value of water approach.

- **The meaning of the *value* of water varies among campaigns.**

Some campaigns focused on the actual monetary value of water compared to other products. For example, California's *Value of Water Campaign* compares the cost of a gallon of tap water to the cost of a gallon of everyday products such as gasoline, wine, bottled water, coffee and milk. In comparison, tap water can be seen as a great deal.

- **Developing and sustaining an impactful budget seems to be the biggest challenge for campaigns; however, forming strategic partnerships or alliances in which various entities that will ultimately benefit from the campaign pool their money can prove quite beneficial.**

Tight budgets were an issue for many of the campaigns. This pattern emerged in Studio No 6's Colorado Stormwater Campaign Study as well. However, as that report illustrated, some of the campaigns were able to work around budget issues and implement successful campaigns through alliances or partnerships. According to the report, "The larger your team, the easier it is to tell your story and less costly" (Colorado Stormwater Campaign Study, 2008).

In the report's section on San Diego's award-winning *Think Blue* campaign, the Deputy Director for San Diego's Storm Water Pollution Prevention Division is quoted as saying, "Of all the challenges we are facing, funding is the biggest." Despite this challenge, the campaign leveraged an initial budget of \$200,000 into a \$1,600,000 media and cause marketing promotional campaign. This was possible due to strong partnerships and in-kind (design and media) donations (Colorado Stormwater Campaign Study, 2008).

Likewise, California and Texas leveraged support from partners. Cities, counties, water agencies, companies and other organizations united to help make the *California Water Awareness Campaign* a success. More than 30 stakeholders contributed funds for the research phase of Texas' *Water IQ* campaign.

- **Designing a campaign in a comprehensive yet scalable manner allows various components of the plan to be implemented as more funding becomes available.**

One way to navigate around budgeting issues is to design the campaign in a way that less expensive portions can move forward without having to wait for more substantial funding necessary for the expensive elements.

- **It is important to use water terminology that is understandable to the average citizen.**

Using water jargon that is confusing to the average citizen will decrease the effectiveness of campaign messages. The Studio No 6 Study found that using understandable water terminology is "the single largest issue when formulating messaging for stormwater pollution." Survey findings analyzed for the report indicate that the general public does not understand terms such as "stormwater" and "watershed." Rather, terms such as "personal water pollution" and "household water pollution" are more understandable (Colorado Stormwater Campaign Study, 2008).



- **Consistency in overall message and effort is key.**  
The campaigns that seemed to be the most successful were consistent in their messages and sustained for an appropriate period of time. In terms of messaging, rather than confusing individuals with numerous, highly complex messages, these campaigns focused on a few simple, fundamental messages.

Please refer to Appendix C for a full list of the campaigns researched for this effort.

## **Key Findings from Stakeholder Survey**

A third important tool for informing this plan was an online survey that was distributed to the Value of Water Subcommittee members, as well as other key water stakeholders listed in Appendix A. This survey asked respondents to provide input on how they think Coloradans currently perceive water issues, the tactics they think would be most effective in changing public perception, and ways the plan could be of greatest use to their broader organizational goals and communications efforts. The survey was sent to a total of 53 individuals, with a response rate of 51% or 27 respondents.

Complete survey results can be found in Appendix D. Below is a summary of the key findings.

- **Survey respondents believe that Coloradans are more aware of the water challenges and issues facing the state today than they were 5-10 years ago.**
  - Respondents attributed the increased awareness to several factors, including enhanced provider communications (particularly related to conservation), the many water outreach activities in recent years (e.g. the Basin Roundtables, the Interbasin Compact Committee and the Colorado Foundation for Water Education), and a longer-than-usual drought shadow from the 2002 drought
- **However, most respondents also feel the awareness is superficial. Respondents said that Coloradans continue to be minimally aware of:**
  - The state's present and future water supply challenges and the reasons behind the projected shortfalls
  - Water runoff and its impact on water quality
  - The many uses of water beyond meeting residential needs
  - The important role of infrastructure improvements in addressing the state's water challenges
- **Respondents indicated that there are several barriers and obstacles to increasing the appreciation of the value of water among Coloradans, including:**
  - The complexity of the issues
  - The limited interest and attention span for water issues among the public
  - The low price of water
  - A lack of overarching, consistent and compelling messages about water across the state; instead, communications efforts are "balkanized" among individual providers and regions

- **Respondents believe that greater understanding of certain facts would have a significant impact on how Coloradans value water, including:**
  - Its true cost
  - Why conservation alone won't secure our water future
  - The link between the tap and the source:
    - How variability in snowpack impacts water supplies
    - The full cycle – the connection between water, skiing, agriculture, economy and the individual user
  - The significance of the investment in water infrastructure
    - As one respondent noted, it is important to tell Coloradans that “It takes people, money, time and passion to bring you the water you use every day”
  - The supply gap and the potential consequences of shortages
  - The many uses of water and the competition and conflict between users
- **The majority of respondents believe that enhancing Coloradans' appreciation of water would be extremely important to their organization.**
  - Most would use this campaign to help further their organizations' goals or to supplement their own messages and communications
  - Many believe this campaign could provide support for their projects, calls to action (e.g., to conserve), infrastructure investment, etc. It could also lead to more informed opinions and dialogue with their stakeholders
  - Some, however, wanted to see the direction of the campaign and what it produced before deciding whether and how to use this effort
- **The majority of respondents believe that advertising and grassroots public education would be the most effective communications/outreach tools for increasing the public's appreciation of water.**
  - Many respondents also named social media and events as effective
  - Printed materials and a website were ranked last in terms of effectiveness
- **The tools that respondents have found to be most effective for communicating with their stakeholders are websites, events, newsletters/e-newsletters and advertising.**
  - Other commonly cited methods include printed materials (including bill inserts) and grassroots outreach/word of mouth
- **Most respondents indicated that their organizations would be highly likely to use campaign videos and web content about the value and appreciation of water, while most would be highly unlikely to use campaign bill inserts.**
  - Many respondents indicated their organizations would be somewhat likely to use campaign fact sheets, campaign brochures and a campaign message platform

Taken together, this research helps inform the direction of this plan. It provides important lessons from other water communications efforts, insight into what the water community is looking for from this campaign, and some perspective of what Coloradans know or should know about water that would yield a greater appreciation of its value.

## SECTION III

### The Communications Plan - Recommendations and Next Steps

As noted above, when it comes to water communication efforts in Colorado, a statewide plan aimed at increasing the general awareness and appreciation of water is unique. This does not mean, however, that it cannot be done successfully. To the contrary, the time is ripe for this effort, the need clearly exists, and the water community wants it. Colorado's water future faces too many challenges and is too important to the future of our state to put off this endeavor. Coloradans need to be informed and engaged participants in helping deliver a secure water future.

However, given the uniqueness of this effort, it is important that this communications plan be strategically and thoughtfully implemented. To be successful, the plan should be implemented in sequential steps. At the outset, there are important issues that State leadership needs to consider, as the outcome of those discussions will heavily influence the direction of this campaign.

This plan is therefore broken down into three sequential phases: Laying the Groundwork, Establishing the Strategic Direction, and Tactical Implementation.

#### **Phase 1: Laying the Groundwork**

There are two fundamental components in this first phase: determining who will be responsible for the implementation of this plan and conducting baseline research.

#### **What is the Role of the State of Colorado?**

A fundamental decision needs to be made at the outset of this effort: Where should responsibility for implementation of this plan rest? Without clear accountability for implementation, this plan will languish. Should the primary accountability lie with the State of Colorado or with a broader group? Is the State the leader of this group, or does it facilitate its formation and step away, letting let a third-party group move forward on its own with implementation? Alternatively, does the State facilitate the campaign's formation and then continue to be engaged as a full partner?

The consequences of this decision are fundamental to the direction of this campaign.

- **Funding:** The more participants in this effort, the greater the opportunities to raise sufficient revenue. Moreover, the potential funding opportunities will vary depending upon whether state government owns this effort or a separate new entity.
- **Resources and expertise:** Implementation of a statewide communications plan of this nature will require significant staff time and skill sets in disciplines where the State may have limited expertise (e.g., marketing).

- **Messaging:** The messages, including a call to action, will vary depending upon whether the State or a broader coalition of water stakeholders leads this effort.
- **Other Considerations:** The audiences that are targeted, the tactics to be implemented, and other campaign elements will also be influenced by this decision.

These issues, coupled with the experience of other states (Texas in particular<sup>1</sup>), suggest that Colorado's role should be more of a facilitator as opposed to being the entity owning responsibility for implementing this plan.

This decision is not one, however, that should be made without thoughtful discussion among State leadership. Decision-makers at the CWCB, Department of Natural Resources, and the Governor's Office should examine the pros and cons of the various approaches. If those discussions lead to the conclusion that the State should not be the owner of this effort and instead should act as a facilitator, State leadership should then reach out to decision-makers in the statewide water community and engage them in a thoughtful dialogue about the ideal group to lead this effort<sup>2</sup>. This discussion should address several issues:

- **Goals and Objectives:** If a larger water stakeholder group is formed, its goals and objectives may differ from the State's. Clarity will be required in determining campaign goals and what the group hopes to accomplish.
- **Funding:** There are a variety of potential funding sources, a list of which is provided in Appendix E. One potential source is the water organizations who are part of the effort and who will benefit from this plan. Their willingness to contribute should be explored in this discussion, as well as other potential funding sources
- **Structure:** Several possibilities exist in terms of the structure of the group leading the campaign, including forming a 501(c)(3), a membership-based organization, and others. This decision can impact funding, as foundations generally do not provide funds to state-run efforts and instead target their programs to non-profit entities.

Gathering the state's water leadership for these discussions will lead to decisions that will clarify the path forward for this campaign.

## Research

Comprehensive baseline research in the form of a statewide survey and focus groups is essential. This is a task that the State should undertake, regardless of its long-term role with implementing the plan. Thus, the research component does not need to wait until a decision is made about the State's role in the campaign.

<sup>1</sup> The State of Texas initially undertook responsibility for designing and implementing a campaign that was similar in nature. State funding challenges, however, forced the State to abandon its leadership role and the program was ultimately licensed to the marketing firm that created the plan. The firm was then able to persuade specific water entities to implement the campaign on a smaller geographic scale.

<sup>2</sup> Regardless of the decision made, it will be important for State leadership to engage the state's water leadership in a dialogue about this campaign and incorporate them as partners in this effort.

Since the release of the SWSI report in 2004, the state's water leadership has engaged in an important dialogue about water issues and challenges facing Colorado. This dialogue has produced invaluable information and direction for securing Colorado's water future; however, a key ingredient in this dialogue has been missing. Greater understanding is needed regarding the concerns, desires, and perceptions of the *general public*. Without knowing what Coloradans think, want and are concerned about, effective planning for the future will be hampered and the information upon which decisions are made will be incomplete.

Understanding the public's perceptions of water is crucial to this campaign. This was a lesson learned from other states such as California and Texas, which based their programs on comprehensive statewide surveys. This research will ensure that the messages, the brand identity, the call to action and the tactics used will be the most effective in moving the needle of public perception. It will also provide the needed benchmark against which to measure the success of this effort.

A comprehensive statewide survey of Coloradans from geographically diverse parts of the state is needed. Following the completion of the survey, focus groups should be used to gain more in-depth information and to follow-up on specific survey findings. The cost for this research would be determined through an RFP process. A minimum of \$75,000-\$100,000 should be expected for this effort; however, \$100,000-\$150,000 could be necessary depending upon the sample size and number of focus groups that are conducted. Follow-up research will also likely be required to test the selected messaging and branding identity for efficacy.

## **Phase 2: Establishing the Strategic Direction**

After the research has been completed and the decision made about who is taking ownership of this effort, the campaign is then ready to move into its second phase where its strategic direction is established.

### **Understanding the Target Audiences**

Identifying the right target audiences for this campaign, as well as their baseline perceptions and communication preferences, is critical to the success of the effort. The goal of this campaign is to increase the awareness and appreciation of the value of water among the general Colorado public. Therefore, our target audience is the average Coloradan whose knowledge and awareness of the state's water issues and challenges is likely limited. With such a broad target audience, the communication tactics will need to have broad-based appeal to reach a wide array of stakeholders across a range of age groups, ethnicities and geographic locations. Moreover, the research conducted at the outset of the campaign will be critical in helping to understand how to most effectively communicate with the average Coloradan.

Although the bulk of the campaign focus will be on reaching this broad audience, the campaign also needs to be cognizant of specific sub-groups of Coloradans who may require a more tailored approach that will resonate more effectively with their unique viewpoints and communication preferences. Specific audiences to consider include:

- **Latino and African American Populations:** Latinos make up 20.7% of the Colorado population, while African Americans make up 4.0%. A recent Denver Water study<sup>3</sup> showed that Latino and African American populations have distinct views and behaviors regarding water. For example, Latinos were far less likely to agree that their tap water is clean and safe, and both African Americans and Latinos were less likely to believe that there is a “real danger” that we could run out of water in the future. Spanish-only speakers were also less likely to take steps to conserve water. This data suggests that the campaign may need messages and communication tactics specifically tailored to these audiences.
- **Geographic Sub-Populations:** Surveys have shown that Coloradans residing in different geographic areas tend to differ in their levels of understanding and concern regarding water issues. For example, the 2007 Public Opinions on Water Quality Issues survey showed that concern for protecting natural resources was highest among the residents of Colorado’s mountain regions and that Front Range residents were less likely to know where their water comes from. These are important considerations when developing messaging and outreach strategies. These regional differences should be explored further during the research phase to determine whether messaging and outreach should be segmented by geographic area.
- **Other Target Audience Considerations:** Surveys also showed that water-related opinions and knowledge differed among various age groups and among those with different education levels or political affiliations. The research conducted at the outset of the implementation phase should shed additional light on these demographic differences and whether it is necessary to develop any segmented outreach aimed at reaching additional specific sub-groups.

The comprehensive research effort will yield a more comprehensive understanding of the target audiences, including baseline knowledge levels, viewpoints and communication preferences, so that messaging and outreach can be appropriately tailored to achieve maximum impact. It will also inform the degree to which communication activities need to be tailored to any of the sub-groups mentioned above.

## Message Platform

Previously conducted surveys show that most Coloradans have a general level of awareness and concern for water issues. Yet, it also appears that most Coloradans lack the knowledge and understanding required to fully value and appreciate the state’s water resources or to understand the magnitude of the state’s projected water shortfalls. By using messages that increase the understanding among all Coloradans of the multiple uses of water and the critical role it plays in supporting the state’s quality of life and economic prosperity, the campaign will enable Coloradans to embrace the importance of water as an intrinsic value that affects everything from the way they recreate to how they live their day-to-day lives.

According to the survey and discussions with the Value of Water Subcommittee, there are several messages that the group believes could help to foster a greater value and appreciation

<sup>3</sup> A Survey of Denver Latinos and African Americans, 2010, sponsored by Denver Water



for water. Based on the input gathered thus far, there seem to be four core themes around which the campaign's message platform could be built. These include:

- The Life Cycle of Water:** There is significant lack of understanding among Coloradans about where their water comes from and where it goes after it disappears down the drain. One step to fostering a greater appreciation of water could be to help Coloradans understand the life cycle of water, including the long journey it takes from source to tap to treatment plant, as well as the effort and infrastructure required in this elaborate process. One survey respondent mentioned “the great lengths and distances water travels” and “the expense of creating that system” as two things that could change the detached, indifferent manner in which some Coloradans currently think about water.
- The Finite Nature of Water/Projected Shortfalls:** While there is some understanding of the state's projected water shortfalls, most residents do not have the level of awareness required to instill an appropriate sense of urgency and value for the state's water resources. In addition to communicating the finite nature of water as a resource, the campaign could explain the state's projected water shortage issues in *understandable, public-friendly* terms. Messages could touch on the potential consequences of the projected shortages, or as one survey respondent noted, “how [shortages] could change the state and people's daily lives.” While it will be important to paint a realistic picture of the state's water shortfall, it is also important to incorporate messages that are positive and inspirational when discussing this issue. In order to inspire Coloradans to get engaged, they must believe that this is a solvable problem and that they play a significant role in its solution.
- The True Cost of Water:** Many of the survey respondents cited the low price of water as one of the greatest barriers to increasing appreciation for the resource. As one respondent noted, “People do not value a resource that costs them nearly nothing.” While the price of water will likely remain relatively low for the near future, campaign messages can help communicate the true cost of water in terms of how much is spent annually on infrastructure, water quality and wastewater treatment. Similar to California's *Value of Water Campaign*, comparisons can be drawn between the true cost of a gallon of water versus other valuable products such as gasoline, milk, bottled water or wine. By illustrating all of water's hidden costs, Coloradans could gain a greater appreciation for the true value of their water.
- The Varied Uses of Water:** Survey respondents repeatedly mentioned the public's lack of understanding of the varied uses of water and the connection between various water needs. Helping people to understand all of the multiple uses of water – and that household use is just a small piece of the puzzle – could help to enhance water appreciation overall. In particular, messages that connect the state's water supply to its economic prosperity could prove to be effective. One survey respondent suggested that the campaign should help people to understand “all that is made possible by water” particularly by tying it “to the economy and economic recovery.”

It will also be important to incorporate an overarching call to action in the campaign's message platform. If people don't understand how they can be part of the solution, a “so what?” reaction could be generated, thus causing people to disengage from the campaign. The specific call to action is a decision that should be made by the group ultimately responsible for the plan's implementation.



Because there are many water communication efforts aimed at specific calls to action (e.g., conservation), it may be more appropriate for this campaign to incorporate a softer approach that utilizes a theme of common responsibility and asks Coloradans to be a part of the solution to the state's water issues. Through this call to action, the campaign can convey that individuals' collective efforts can indeed help to solve the problem over the long term. The public opinion survey and focus groups recommended for the first phase of this campaign will provide critical input to be used in deciding the call to action.

The research phase will also enable the team to refine the message platform prior to campaign implementation. It will be extremely important that the research test each of the message themes described above among various audiences to determine the most effective messages for enhancing the value and appreciation of water. The research should also be used to narrow down the number of core messages. It is likely that during the course of the research, two or three core messages will rise to the top as the most impactful, and they should form the basis for all campaign communications, outreach activities and materials.

## Establishing the Brand

Once the groundwork for this effort has been laid and the basic message platform finalized, one of the important next steps will be to establish a strong brand identity for the campaign. A graphic designer/branding firm should be engaged to help establish the campaign's visual brand elements. After the initial logo and tagline have been approved, the brand identity should be utilized in all campaign outreach activities, including advertising, websites, email blasts, newsletters and other materials.

The essence of the brand should be further explored during the research phase, which will help to determine the core messages and brand values that resonate the most with the target audiences. However, summarized below are several initial brand development considerations:

- The brand must convey a statewide image that is differentiated from the other local water campaigns and provider communications with which Coloradans are already familiar.
- In addition to conveying the gravity of the state's water issues, the campaign brand should also convey an inspirational and positive message by expressing that Colorado's water problems are solvable. In other words, the campaign should create a sense of urgency and concern without causing outright discouragement.
- Above all else, the campaign brand must focus on the *true value* of water. There are many other water-related topics that may seem relevant to the effort but that may ultimately detract from the campaign's key message. It will important that the campaign avoids becoming too fragmented with competing messages (e.g., usage, conservation, water quality, etc.). Conveying the overarching value of water is the true essence of the campaign.

Once options for a brand identity have been developed, they should be tested through additional focus groups or through other mechanisms identified by the brand consultant before

making the final selection. This will ensure that the brand identity that is ultimately selected will resonate effectively with the public and communicate the desired message.

### **Phase 3: Campaign Implementation and Tactics**

#### **Campaign Tactics**

After the target audiences are clarified, the messages refined, and the brand established, the campaign will be ready to move into the full-blown tactical implementation phase.

We recommend a variety of tactics that together comprise the toolkit for the campaign. However, it is important to note that not all outreach tactics are considered equal; some have far greater impact than others. The most impactful tactics also tend to be the most resource-intensive and expensive, and it may not be possible to implement the most optimal tactics due to cost constraints. This does not mean, however, that only those tactics that are “low hanging fruit” and easiest to achieve should be implemented, as this alone would be ineffective. In the Campaign Funding Levels section below, we recommend ways to optimize the tactical approach for a variety of different budget levels.

Tactics have been grouped into three levels according to their potential impact: High-Impact Tactics, Secondary Tactics and Supportive Tactics.

#### **High-Impact Tactics**

The tactics that will have the greatest impact are:

- **Mass-Media Advertising:** No tactic has the potential to reach more people in more areas of the state than a highly-effective, multi-faceted statewide advertising campaign. Of all the various communication tactics, the Value of Water Subcommittee ranked advertising as a top priority for increasing the public’s appreciation of water (84% selected this option).

A variety of mediums should be utilized, including television, radio, print, billboard and transit advertising. In order to attain the necessary breadth of reach, the bulk of the advertising will need to be paid, but the campaign should also evaluate the supplemental use of free Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to minimize costs. If the budget will support advertising, the campaign will need to contract with an experienced media buyer who can develop a comprehensive media buy that will ensure the most effective approach to reaching the target audience(s).

- **Media Relations:** An effective media relations campaign that keeps the dialogue about water at the top of the public’s mind will be a crucial part of a successful campaign. This will require continually pitching the state’s media outlets about water trends and stories on the state’s water future. Additional efforts should be made to have the media report on water supply on a more regular basis. For example, reporters could make updates on snowpack levels a part of their regular weather reports, thus helping to create the link between today’s snowpack and tomorrow’s water supply. Identifying these types of

regular media coverage opportunities will help to bring water issues to the forefront of the public dialogue.

The campaign will need to contract with a media relations consultant who should develop a comprehensive media relations plan including an editorial calendar of media opportunities and events. Utilizing the media relations staff of campaign partners can also help maximize the effectiveness of this tactic.

- **Coordinating with Water 2012:** Many opportunities for synergies exist between Water 2012 and this campaign. Accordingly, the campaign should coordinate closely with the Water 2012 effort and explore potential partnerships with them. While the two efforts should remain distinct, Water 2012 could provide an excellent platform to help launch this campaign. The team should work with Water 2012 to potentially incorporate some of this campaign's messages into their materials and events. Furthermore, Water 2012 may help to establish some important grassroots partnerships that could be leveraged in the future. After the Water 2012 effort has been completed, this campaign may be able to coordinate ongoing grassroots outreach with the partners established by Water 2012, thus saving time and resources. The specific opportunities to coordinate will become clearer once Water 2012 has developed its own communications plan<sup>4</sup>.

## Secondary Tactics

Although less significant than the high-impact tactics, these secondary tactics nonetheless have the potential to be very effective in increasing the public's value and awareness of water.

- **Grassroots Public Education/Events:** Several survey respondents mentioned their success in using grassroots outreach techniques, and more than 80% named grassroots public education as a top communication method for increasing the public's appreciation of water. Grassroots outreach will need to occur at the local level, perhaps by engaging local ambassadors in various areas of the state to represent the program. These individuals could give water presentations to local groups and organizations or hold regional water forums and roundtable discussions to share water information and engage in public dialogue. There may be opportunities to utilize the Basin Roundtables and the IBCC in this grassroots outreach. This tactic can be very labor intensive and costly, but the rewards can be well worth the effort.
- **Leveraging Existing Communications:** By leveraging some of the existing communication channels used by water providers and organizations across the state, the campaign has the potential to significantly broaden its reach. The challenge with this technique is developing content that can be effectively used by other entities while still retaining the campaign brand. In the Value of Water Subcommittee survey, most respondents said that they would be highly likely to use web content and videos about the value of water. Many respondents also said that they would be likely to use campaign fact sheets, brochures and a message platform. These tools are likely to be the most effective when partnering with statewide water providers and organizations, and accordingly the campaign should work to develop web content, videos, brochures,

<sup>4</sup> A draft of the Water 2012 communications plan is expected in early to mid-July, after which representatives of the CWCB and Water 2012 should meet to identify specific coordinating opportunities.

fact sheets and messaging that can be utilized by these entities. The majority of respondents said that they would be highly unlikely to use bill inserts.

## Supportive Tactics

The tactics and tools outlined below are considered necessary in any campaign effort. However, these tools are only meant to help support the other tactics in the toolkit. They do not constitute a campaign in and of themselves.

- **Website/Social Media:** The campaign must have an online component. All of the campaigns that were analyzed had a website, and this one should be no different. Using the message platform as a basis, the campaign website should provide information and facts that encourage people to value and appreciate their water resources. The website should also house important information and materials that can be easily accessed by campaign partners. Additionally, social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter can be utilized to create a dynamic dialogue with the public about water issues, thus helping to further increase awareness and engagement.
- **Printed Materials:** The campaign will need to produce printed materials that communicate the core messages of the effort. These may include brochures, fact sheets and handouts which could be distributed to stakeholders via other water providers and organizations as described above. These materials could also be accessed on the campaign website. Once the campaign develops its own following, we also recommend doing a regular newsletter, in print and electronic format, that provides updates on water issues and helps to elevate water awareness and appreciation overall.

It is important to note that the research phase should be used to test the effectiveness of these various tactics and to ensure that Coloradans' communication preferences are aligned with the tactics that are ultimately implemented.

## Campaign Funding Levels

It may not be possible to implement all of the previously discussed campaign tactics due to budget constraints. To maximize the effectiveness of the campaign, the tactics will need to be tailored to the funding that is available for campaign implementation. If funds are limited, the focus should be on lower-cost, higher-impact tactics; if the budget is significant, then a more large-scale, comprehensive approach would be appropriate.

To prioritize these tactics, they are grouped according to various budget levels. Level one tactics could be implemented with a relatively low campaign budget. Level two tactics would require a higher budget and would include tactics from level one as well as additional, more impactful and more costly tactics. Likewise, level three builds off levels one and two and represents the most robust, impactful and costly approach.

Please note that the monetary figures included below are meant only as guidelines and are not to be taken as strict future funding requirements.

- **Level One – Lower Campaign Budget (less than \$100,000)**

Although a mass-media advertising campaign would be the most effective and impactful tactic, it would not be possible with a budget under roughly \$100,000. However, there are many ways in which the campaign could effectively move forward by using the following lower-cost tactics:

- Existing Communications Channels – The campaign would clearly need to leverage existing communications channels as much as possible and partner with other water entities/campaigns to distribute its messages. Piggybacking off their events, activities and communications provides a low-cost, high-impact way to share campaign messages.
- Coordinating with Water 2012 – The present campaign should coordinate activities and messaging with Water 2012, which could provide a valuable platform to help launch the campaign and further its goals.
- Website, Social Media & Campaign Collateral – Creating a website and basic campaign collateral are necessary for the campaign regardless of budget level; however, they do not constitute a campaign in and of themselves. These are supportive tactics that must be used in conjunction with other more sophisticated and comprehensive tactics. Social media can nicely complement these tactics.
- PSAs – PSAs could provide a more cost effective, though likely less impactful, approach than paid media. Donated advertising should be pursued heavily with a lower budget.
- Media Relations – With a limited budget, media relations should still be conducted; however, it may be done using a more scaled-back approach. Op-ed pieces could be written by key influencers in the water community and strategically placed in specific newspapers throughout the state.

- **Level Two – Medium Campaign Budget (\$100,000 – \$500,000)**

In addition to the level one tactics, a campaign with a medium size budget (roughly between \$100,000 and \$500,000), has the ability to use more sophisticated tactics, including paid media. Thus, we recommend the following additional tactics:

- Mass Media Advertising (Radio and Outdoor) – The campaign should work with a media buyer to maximize the effectiveness of paid media. Given a budget in this range, a massive statewide television advertising campaign is not possible. However, a media buyer can help determine the “high priority” areas within the state that will have the greatest impact for relatively less expensive and targeted radio and outdoor advertisements. Some select television advertising may also be possible within the higher budget ranges of this level.
- Media Relations – More comprehensive and continuous media relations should be used to regularly place stories in specific publications. This will also allow campaign messages to remain top-of-mind among the target audiences.

- **Level Three – Higher Campaign Budget (more than \$500,000)**

A budget over \$500,000 would be ideal for the proposed communications campaign and allow for the use of the most comprehensive, far-reaching and impactful tactics. In addition to the tactics from levels one and two, a campaign with this budget should use the following tactics:

- Statewide Mass-Media Advertising Campaign – As previously mentioned, of all the possible tactics, a highly-effective, multi-faceted statewide advertising campaign has the greatest potential to reach the greatest number of individuals across the state. At this budget level, we recommend a strong focus on television advertising with support from a variety of other mediums, including, radio, print, billboard and transit advertising, among others.
- Grassroots Public Education/Events –Grassroots public education can be labor intensive and expensive; however, the rewards are well worth the effort. A budget of this size would allow for an effective grassroots outreach effort to help supplement the other campaign tactics.

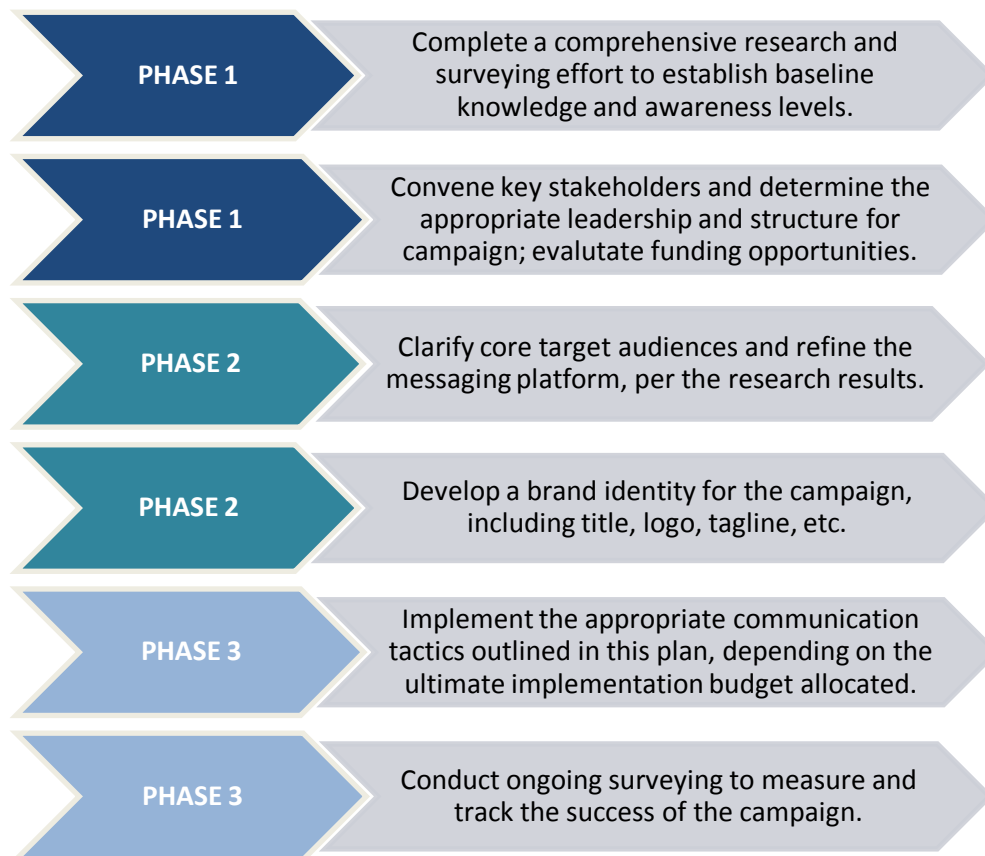
## Measuring Campaign Success

Measuring the campaign's success on an ongoing basis is critical. It is important to determine if the campaign is indeed making an impact and achieving its goals. This enables the campaign to demonstrate its success and justify its existence to funders. The expense of measuring success is well-worth the benefit of knowing that the campaign is indeed making a difference – or, if not, how to make necessary adjustments to ensure success in the future.

The best way to measure the success of this plan will be to conduct a follow-up survey on Coloradans' water knowledge and appreciation levels and to compare the responses to the research conducted at the campaign's outset. We recommend conducting a follow-up survey one year after the campaign's initial launch and then every subsequent two years moving forward. The initial research effort will be crucial to establishing a baseline level of knowledge and awareness by which we can continually measure success throughout the implementation of the campaign.

## Summary of Roadmap

The following graphic illustrates the sequential steps that should be taken.



While this plan provides a roadmap, a more detailed plan will be needed before moving into the implementation phase. Contracting through an RFP process with an experienced media buyer, brand expert and communications consultant will provide the necessary expertise to achieve success.



## APPENDIX A

### Value of Water Subcommittee Members and Additional Key Stakeholders

#### Value of Water Subcommittee Members:

- Aquacraft
- Aurora Water
- City of Boulder
- City of Greeley
- City of Thornton
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Colorado Foundation for Water Education
- Colorado River District
- Colorado Springs Utilities
- Colorado State University/Colorado Water Institute
- Colorado WaterWise
- Denver Water
- Fort Collins
- Grand Junction
- Greenway Foundation
- Mesa County
- Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District
- Pagosa Springs
- Platte Canyon Water
- Rio Grande Watershed
- Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District
- Water 2012

#### Additional Water Stakeholders:

- Bart Miller, Western Resource Advocates
- Bette Blinde, Colorado Foundation for Agriculture
- Brian Werner, Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District
- Carlyle Currier, Colorado Farm Bureau
- Charlie Bartlett, Agriculture Water Alliance
- Dave Eckhardt, Colorado Corn Growers Association
- Don Shawcroft, Colorado Farm Bureau
- Drew Beckwith, Western Resource Advocates
- Frank Jaeger, Parker Water and Sanitation District
- Jean Van Pelt, Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District
- Jeff Crane, Colorado Watershed Assembly
- John Sanderson, The Nature Conservancy
- Laurie D'Audney, City of Fort Collins
- Mark Shively, Douglas County Water Resource Authority
- Nolan Doesken, Colorado State University
- Paul Fanning, Pueblo Board of Water Works
- Robert Sakata, Sakata Farms
- Ron Redd, Castle Rock Utilities Department
- Ruth Quade, Greeley Water and Sewer Department
- Tom Cech, Central Colorado Water Conservancy District

## APPENDIX B

### Findings from Other Water-Related Surveys

- **There is a high level of concern among Coloradans about the fragility of the environment, including having clean water, clean air, natural areas and wildlife.**

Conservation in the West Survey: A survey of the attitudes of voters in five Western States, 2011

- 71% of Coloradans consider these environmental qualities to be an aspect of life here that is fragile, a higher percentage than any of the Western states surveyed.
- When asked about the top two or three environmental issues that Coloradans are facing today, 31% of respondents named water pollution/clean water as one of the top issues, and 28% named air pollution. Water supplies and drought came in third at 20%. (Note: This was an unprompted, open-ended question.)

Public Opinions on Water Quality Issues, 2007

- Water and air pollution are the most important environmental issues to Coloradans. Thirty-four percent said water pollution was the most important environmental issue (as compared to 35% who responded air pollution), and 68% said water pollution was one of the two most important issues to them.

- **There is evidence that many Coloradans understand that there is a water shortfall within the state.**

Conservation in the West Survey: A survey of the attitudes of voters in five Western States, 2011

- Inadequate water supply was ranked as an extremely or very serious issue by 46% of Colorado respondents. The only topics rated more important were the loss of family farms and ranches (49% said this was an extremely or very serious issue) and the state budget deficit (74% said this was an extremely or very serious issue).

Public Perceptions, Preferences and Values for Water in the West, 2008

- Nearly 50% of Coloradans believe that there is not enough water to meet the state's current needs in the short term, and more than 70% believe that there is not enough water to meet the state's needs in the long term. When compared to other Western states, a greater percentage of Coloradans think that there will be water scarcity in both the short and long term, indicating a greater awareness in our state about water shortage issues.

### Colorado River Water Conservation District Survey, 2009

- A majority of district residents say the state is not in a drought today; however, looking ahead ten years, most find Colorado water lacking. Over half (55%) of voters say we are not in a drought today and nearly two-thirds (64%) believe Colorado has an adequate amount of water to meet current needs. Yet, when asked to contemplate future water needs, just 31% believe that there is an adequate supply of water in Colorado, while 57% say that there is an inadequate amount.
- However, the same survey found that issues other than water were at the forefront of regional concerns today. Just 37% in the Colorado River Water District describe “inadequate water supplies” as an extremely or very serious problem in the Western Slope. Concern about water supplies ranks well behind issues such as the economy (75%), loss of farmlands, ranches and orchards (55%) and taxes (46%).
- **There may be variations by age, education level, partisan affiliation, geographic location and ethnicity concerning various beliefs about water.**

### Colorado River Water Conservation District Survey, 2009

- Seniors (67%), voters in the northern part of the district (65%), Democrats (65%) and college-educated respondents (62%) are most likely to say there will be an inadequate water supply in the next decade.
- With increased age comes a greater likelihood of saying that there will be an inadequate water supply in the next decade, including ages 18-34 (33%), ages 35-44 (59%), ages 45-54 (59%), ages 55-64 (65%) and ages 65+ (67%).
- With increased education comes a greater likelihood of saying that there will be an inadequate water supply in the next decade, including high school or less (47%), some college (55%) and college degree (62%).
- Democrats (65%) were the most likely to say there will be an inadequate water supply in the next decade, followed by Independents (62%) and Republicans (51%).
- Headwaters (66%) were more likely than downstream (43%) to say there will be an inadequate water supply in the next decade.

### Denver Water: A Survey of Denver Latinos and African Americans

- While 86% of “All Denver Water Customers” agree tap water is clean and safe, 70% of Latinos, 68% of African Americans and 45% of Latinos who only speak

Spanish say it is safe. Further, agreement is lower among Latino and African American females than males.

- There is much more doubt as to whether there is a “real danger” we will run out of water, with 48% of Latinos, 45% of African Americans and 62% of Latinos who only speak Spanish saying this is “definitely” or “probably” true.
- **There is a low level of awareness among Coloradans regarding where their water comes from.**

Public Opinions on Water Quality Issues, 2007

- Within focus groups, responses varied widely as participants tried to describe where their water comes from. Only a few residents out of all the groups could describe the full process of how they believe water reaches their homes, from snowmelt to tap. Front Range participants had the most difficulty explaining where their water comes from.
- More than one-third of Coloradans don’t know where water run-off goes.
- **There is a low level of awareness among Coloradans regarding the varied uses of water within the state.**

Colorado River Water Conservation District Survey, 2009

- Less than half in this area recognize that Colorado is obligated to meet certain water obligations to down river states. Forty-eight percent of residents are aware that a certain amount of water must flow to other states, while nearly one-in-five (19%) believe that the state can keep all water from the Colorado River. One-third (32%) do not know one way or the other.
- Survey respondents mistakenly believed that households and industry use the most water, indicating that people are not well-informed about who actually uses the majority of water in the West (agriculture).
- **Coloradans recognize the importance of the state’s water resources to our economic prosperity and to them personally.**

Conservation in the West Survey: A survey of the attitudes of voters in five Western States, 2011

- Voters in these five states attach a great deal of importance to having clean water, clean air, natural areas and wildlife as a fundamental ingredient in the good quality of life in their state (87% extremely or very important). Two-thirds of these Western voters view those things as an aspect of life that is fragile and needs to be cared for and protected (69%), rather than as an enduring feature that is unlikely to change (26%).

- This underlying sense of guarding a fragile yet important part of their lives appears to play a role in how Western voters respond to a range of environmental issues. Two-thirds believe the current laws protecting land, air and water should be strengthened, or at least better enforced (66% combined, 18% strengthened, 48% better enforced).

#### Colorado River Water Conservation District Survey, 2009

- Residents very much recognize the value of the Colorado River and its tributaries to the economy and them personally. Three-quarters (76%) of voters say that the phrase “important to the economy on the Western Slope” describes the Colorado River and the rivers and streams that flow into it very well. Similarly, seven-in-ten say that the river is “important to me personally” (69% describes the Colorado River and its tributaries very well).

#### Survey of Public Attitudes about Water Issues in Colorado, 2005

- Coloradans are very concerned with drinking water and overall water quality, but overall, water for personal use was deemed more important than water for environmental, agricultural, industrial or recreational use. Of the various water issues, Colorado survey respondents ranked clean drinking water, clean rivers and clean ground water as the most important issues. Water for recreation and landscaping came in last.

- **Despite economic challenges, the majority of Coloradans continue to support government funding for land, water and wildlife protection.**

#### Conservation in the West Survey: A survey of the attitudes of voters in five Western States, 2011

- Voters surveyed in Colorado tend to reject the concept that the economy and the environment are in conflict with one another. They overwhelmingly believe that “we can protect land and water and have a strong economy with good jobs at the same time, without having to choose one over the other” (77%). One-in-five (20%) agree more with the statement that “sometimes protections for land and water and a strong economy are in conflict and we must choose one over the other.”
- One of the most resounding affirmative responses in the survey is agreement that “even with state budget problems, we should still find the money to protect Colorado’s land, water and wildlife.” Eighty-seven percent of Colorado voters agree with this view.

Public Opinions on Water Quality Issues, 2007

- Most Coloradans support government funding for water pollution controls and river cleanup. People were more likely to support funding for K-12 education over water issues, but they support funding for water issues over air pollution and highways/streets.

Public Perceptions, Preferences and Values for Water in the West, 2008

- In order to pay for capital investments, respondents target increased fees for the heaviest water users and increased fees for new development. Respondents are not averse to limiting growth and joining water and land use planning in order to address long-term scarcity.
- A majority of respondents are willing to pay additional fees on their watering bill to fund water related programs. The most popular programs that people were willing to fund include constructing reservoirs for storage, keeping irrigated farms in production and creating a reuse water system for public landscapes. The least popular programs include increasing household water efficiency by subsidizing efficient water appliances, making water infrastructure improvements in rural communities to compensate for water being transferred from farms to cities and setting aside water for public-based recreation.
- **Many Coloradans are unfamiliar with basic water terms, indicating a need to communicate water issues using language more understandable to the average Coloradan.**

Public Perceptions, Preferences and Values for Water in the West, 2008

- Most Colorado respondents were not familiar with basic water terms, such as Water Reuse, Consumptive Use and Surface Water.
- **The majority of water education efforts in the state have not focused on the appreciation and value of water.**

Colorado Water Education Task Force: 2008 Water Education Survey & Focus Group Report, 2008

- When asked about the main purpose of their water education efforts, only 2.7% responded the “appreciation and value of water.” Top responses were conservation (20%), information (17.3%), and environmental science (13.3%).
- **Americans value water over any other service they receive; industrial/agricultural businesses rank it second.**

ITT Value of Water Survey: Americans on the U.S. Water Crisis, 2010

- 95% of American voters value water over any other service they receive, including heat, electricity, Internet, cell phone, land line phone, cable TV and cooling systems.
- Our nation's industrial and agricultural businesses – among the heaviest water users – rank water second, only after electricity.
- About three out of four American voters and industrial/agricultural businesses say disruptions in the water system would have direct and personal consequences.



## Survey and Poll Citations

The following is a list of all water-related surveys and opinion polls that were analyzed in the development of this plan.

1. Conservation in the West Survey: A survey of the attitudes of voters in five Western States  
 Methodology: Random telephone interviews  
 Sample size: 600 Coloradans; 400 registered voters each in Montana, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming  
 Date: Jan. 2011  
 Sponsor: Colorado College State of the Rockies Project
2. Public Perceptions, Preferences and Values for Water in the West  
 Methodology: Three focus groups, email survey to 203,750 randomly selected households in Western US  
 Sample size: 535 Coloradans  
 Date: 2008  
 Sponsor: Colorado State University, Colorado Water Congress
3. Colorado River Water Conservation District Survey  
 Methodology: Random telephone interviews  
 Sample size: 500 registered voters in the 15-county Colorado River District  
 Date: May, June 2009  
 Sponsor: Colorado River District
4. Public Opinions on Water Quality Issues  
 Methodology: Random telephone interviews  
 Sample size: 1,929 Coloradans, approximately 284 surveys by residents in each of five geographic locations in the state  
 Date: 2007  
 Sponsor: Water Quality Control Division, CDPHE
5. Survey of Public Attitudes about Water Issues in Colorado  
 Methodology: Direct mail to random residences in N. and S. Dakota, Montana, Colorado, Wyoming and Utah  
 Sample size: 309 Coloradans completed the survey  
 Date: November 2004  
 Sponsor: Colorado State University
6. Colorado Water Education Task Force: 2008 Water Education Survey & Focus Group Report  
 Methodology: Quantitative online survey  
 Sample size: Unknown

Date: 2008  
 Sponsor: Colorado Water Conservation Board, in partnership with the Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education and the Colorado Watershed Network

7. Denver Water: A Survey of Denver Latinos and African Americans

Methodology: Phone and in-person interviews  
 Sample size: 715 Latinos and African Americans in the Denver Water service area (309 English-dominant Latinos; 205 Spanish-dominant Latinos; 201 African Americans)  
 Date: 2010  
 Sponsor: Denver Water

8. ITT Value of Water Survey: Americans on the U.S. Water Crisis

Methodology: National telephone survey  
 Sample size: 1,003 American voters  
 Date: August, September 2010  
 Sponsor: ITT

9. City of Thornton Water Efficiency Campaign Research Report

Methodology: Telephone survey consisting of a 10-minute interview  
 Sample Size: 100 City of Thornton water users (targeting 70% high water users and 30% low water users)  
 Date: 2007  
 Sponsor: City of Thornton

10. Colorado Drought and Water Supply Update 2007

Methodology: Telephone survey  
 Sample Size: 200 municipal and urban water providers in Colorado  
 Date: 2007  
 Sponsor: Colorado Water Conservation Board

11. State of the Industry Report 2010: How water professionals are meeting ongoing challenges and economic uncertainty

Methodology: More than 17,000 AWWA members invited to participate in the on-line survey  
 Sample Size: Over 2,000 self-selected AWWA members  
 Date: 2010  
 Sponsor: American Water Works Association

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## 12. Water Conservation: Customer Behavior and Effective Communications

Methodology: Multi-pronged approach including an in-depth literature review, telephone interviews with water agency personnel, surveys of residential water customers, analyses of current and past billing records supplied by water agency partners, in-depth case studies of water agencies and their water conservation communication campaigns, and an evaluation of communication methods implemented by the six participating utilities

Sample Size: Data collected from six participating water agencies; historic billing data from 1,000 single-family detached residential accounts in each agency (6,051 in total); survey response data from 1,890 households

Date: 2010

Sponsor: Water Research Foundation

## 13. 2009 Gallup Environment Survey

Methodology: Telephone interviews

Sample Size: 1,012 national adults

Date: 2009

Sponsor: Gallup

## APPENDIX C

### Other Water Communication Efforts and Campaigns

The following is a list of all water-related communication efforts and campaigns that were analyzed in the development of this plan.

1. California Water Awareness Campaign  
 Date<sup>5</sup>: Born from one of the state's worst droughts (1987-1992), this campaign has been running for numerous years  
 Lead Organization: Association of California Water Agencies
2. California's Water: A Crisis We Can't Ignore  
 Date: Summer-Fall 2007  
 Lead Organization: Association of California Water Agencies
3. Value of Water Campaign  
 Date: Present  
 Lead Organization: Association of California Water Agencies
4. Save Our Water  
 Date: 2009  
 Lead Organization: Association of California Water Agencies
5. Water IQ  
 Date: Its roots began in 2004, with the actual campaign starting in 2007  
 Lead Organization: Texas Water Development Board
6. Water is Life, and Infrastructure makes it Happen  
 Date: Roughly 2006/2007 – Present  
 Lead Organization: Water Environment Federation
7. Only Tap Water Delivers Campaign – American Water Conservation Council  
 Date: Present  
 Lead Organization: American Water Works Association
8. It's the Same Water  
 Date: Present  
 Lead Organization: Colorado River District

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<sup>5</sup> Please note that some campaign dates are estimates since exact dates were not available on several campaign websites or materials.

9. Communicating the Value of Water: An Introductory Guide for Water Utilities  
Date: 2008  
Lead Organization: AWWA Research Foundation U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
10. Water by Colorado (Initial Framework)  
Date: 2010/2011  
Lead Organization: Various Water Stakeholders
11. Colorado Stormwater Campaign Study  
Date: 2008  
Lead Organization: Prepared by Studio No 6 for the MS4 Committee Members
12. Think Blue: San Diego  
Date: 2001-2006  
Lead Organization: City of San Diego Storm Water Department
13. Think Blue: Maine  
Date: 2003-2004  
Lead Organization: Maine Department of Environmental Protection
14. Minnesota Water: Let's Keep it Clean  
Date: 2003-2006  
Lead Organization: Metro Watershed Partners
15. Only Rain Down the Stormdrain  
Date: 2003-2006  
Lead Organization: The Northern Virginia Clean Water Partners
16. H2O Jo & The Keep It Clean Campaign  
Date: Present  
Lead Organization: Nonpoint Source Colorado
17. Drought Response Information Project  
Date: Present  
Lead Organization: City of Grand Junction/Collaboration between the Valley's domestic water providers and CSU Cooperative Extension
18. It's the Desert. Live with it.  
Date: Present  
Lead Organization: Grand Valley Irrigators

19. Our Florida. Our Future.

Date: Present

Lead Organization: Collins Center

20. Water Use It Wisely

Date: Present

Lead Organization: Cities of Mesa, Phoenix, Scottsdale, Tempe, Peoria, Chandler, Gilbert, Glendale, Avondale, Surprise, Goodyear, Yuma, Sedona, Fountain Hills and El Mirage

21. Conserve to Enhance

Date: Present

Lead Organization: The University of Arizona: Water Resources Research Center

22. WaterSense – We're for Water

Date: Present

Lead Organization: EPA

## Interviews Conducted with Select Campaigns

1. Holly Vierk  
Texas Water Development Board  
Conservation Division  
Water IQ
2. Jennifer Persike  
Director of Strategic Coordination and Public Affairs  
Association of California Water Agencies  
California Water Awareness Campaign  
Save Our Water  
California's Water: A Crisis We Can't Ignore  
Value of Water
3. Linda Kelly  
Managing Director, Communications  
Water Environment Federation  
Water is Life, and Infrastructure Makes it Happen
4. Greg Kail  
Director of Communications  
American Water Works Association  
Only Tap Water Delivers
5. Amy Conklin  
Coordinator  
Barr-Milton Watershed Association  
Value of Water Initial Framework
6. Jim Pokrandt  
Communications & Education  
Colorado River District  
It's the Same Water



## APPENDIX D

### Stakeholder Survey Results

The following section summarizes the results of the online survey conducted with the Value of Water Subcommittee members and other key water stakeholders in Colorado.

**1. Compared to five or ten years ago, do you think Coloradans are more aware today of the water challenges and issues facing Colorado or less? Why?**

- The level of awareness varies and is also cyclical, but generally most respondents say yes, Coloradans are more aware
- But, the level of awareness continues to be superficial
  - There is limited interest and attention span for water issues (as long as water comes out of the tap and fees don't get too high)
  - Increased awareness of conservation, but the knowledge and awareness generally isn't deeper than that
- This increase in awareness is due to several factors
  - Providers are communicating more (conservation)
  - The Roundtables, IBCC, CFWE
  - Projects (NISP, Southern Delivery, etc.)
  - Longer drought shadow
- Significant challenge: the influx of new residents

**2. With regard to Coloradans' perception and understanding of water in Colorado, has that changed in the last few years? How? (e.g., Are they more aware of the conflicts between uses? That supplies are limited? Of the need to conserve?) Why has it changed?**

- The answers are less clear
  - Some are more aware of the conflicts between uses
  - There is a greater awareness of the need to conserve
  - There may be greater awareness of supply challenges, but superficial – there is limited awareness of the reasons behind the supply challenges
  - Some think there is greater awareness of the challenges facing groundwater users
- Deeper research is needed to ascertain key developments and changes in perception and understanding

**3. What are the greatest barriers or obstacles to increasing the appreciation of the value of water among Coloradans? Among your specific stakeholders?**

- The complexity of the issues – need to speak in terms that resonate with Coloradans and that they can understand
- The limited interest and attention span for water issues
- Providers are good at their job – i.e., people don't need to worry about this

- Price is too low; service is flawless
- The lack of understanding of the full water cycle and how what one individual does benefits the whole and that, in turn, benefits the individual
  - The connection between water and the economy, between east and west slope, between uses – the full picture
- Limited resources
- Lack of overarching, consistent and compelling messages
  - Communications efforts are balkanized

**4. For each of the following water-related issues, please rank the level of awareness that you believe Coloradans currently have.**

- Overall, the majority of respondents believe that Coloradans have either *minimal awareness* or *some awareness* of water-related issues
- Most respondents believe that Coloradans have minimal awareness of the following:
  - Understanding the state's projected water shortages
  - Understanding water runoff and its impact on water quality
  - Understanding the varied uses of water beyond residential needs, such as industrial and agricultural
  - Understanding the important role of infrastructure improvements in addressing the state's water challenges
- Most respondents believe that Coloradans have some awareness of the following:
  - Understanding where their water comes from
  - Understanding the relationship between today's snowpack and tomorrow's water supply
  - Understanding the importance of conservation to addressing the state's water challenges

**5. Coloradans already hear a lot about water, whether it is through provider conservation programs, bill stuffers, news reports, etc. Given that, are there any key messages that they are NOT hearing today that you believe would have a significant impact on how they think about water and their appreciation of its value?**

- Answers varied, but there are several consistent themes
  - They get it in chunks – need to understand the full cycle and the full picture
  - Need a coordinated message that is simple, clever, meaningful and resonates
  - Why conservation alone won't secure our water future
  - The link between the tap and the source
    - How the variability in snowpack impacts water supplies
    - The full cycle – the connection between skiing, rafting, etc. and the tap

- The connection with a healthy economy
    - The connection with agriculture
    - The significance of the investment in water infrastructure
    - The gap – limited supply
    - The many uses and users and the competition and conflict between them
    - The link between stormwater and water quality
    - And more...
  - Deeper research is needed to see which message(s) move the needle of public awareness and appreciation
- 6. Please rank in order of importance (1-7, with 1 being the most important) which of the following things you believe would have the greatest impact on enhancing Coloradans' appreciation for water.**
- Respondents appear to believe that understanding the state's projected water shortages, where their water comes from and the importance of conservation to addressing the state's water challenges would have the greatest impact on enhancing appreciation
  - However, no clear cut conclusions can be drawn
  - There may have been some confusion with the wording of the question
  - Clearly, this is a question that needs further research with a larger audience
- 7. Would you want to use this awareness campaign to further your organization's goals? How?**
- Most said yes
    - Use it to supplement their own messages, communications goals, organizational goals
      - E.g., overarching message could provide support for their projects, causes, calls to conserve, infrastructure investment etc.
    - It can help increase the receptivity of Coloradans to water messages and calls to action
    - Leads to more informed decision-making and opinion-shaping by Coloradans
  - Some are wait and see
    - Depends on what the products are or what the campaign proposes
  - A few said as long as it doesn't compete with their own communications efforts
  - One respondent wants this to lead to legislative and policy changes
- 8. How important is enhancing Coloradans' appreciation of water to your organization?**
- Overall, the majority of respondents believe enhancing Coloradans' appreciation of water is either extremely important or very important to their organization
  - Results include the following:
    - 70.4% – extremely important
    - 18.5% – very important

- 11.1% – somewhat important

**9. When it comes to increasing the public’s appreciation of water, what do you think would be the most effective communication/outreach tools? (Select up to three.)**

- The majority of respondents believe an advertising campaign would be most effective when it comes to increasing the public’s appreciation of water
- Results, in descending order of importance include the following:
  - Advertising campaign – 84.6%
  - Grassroots Public Education – 80.8%
  - Social Media – 50.0%
  - Events (e.g. festivals, conferences) – 38.5%
  - Printed Materials (e.g fact sheets, handouts, bill inserts) – 19.2%
  - Website – 19.2%

**10. Of the various mediums that you currently use to communicate with your stakeholders, what methods do you find to be the most effective? (List up to three)**

- There is wide variation among the methods that respondents find to be the most effective
- Methods generally fall into the following categories:
  - Printed materials
  - Bill inserts, newsletters, bills
  - Web based
  - Website, e-newsletters, emails, social media
  - Advertising (noted for its high numbers and consistent message)
  - Radio, TV, billboards, etc.
  - Events
  - Media
  - News media (when they get it right), City Magazine
  - Grassroots outreach (noted for its low reach but high effectiveness)
  - Meetings and presentations
  - Educational outreach
  - Meetings, seminars, school programs
  - Partnerships
  - Other
  - Commitment from customers – pledge

**11. This plan will include recommendations for developing specific tools to enhance the value and appreciation of water. How likely would your organization be to utilize the following communication tools/programs?**

- Overall, most respondents indicate that their organizations would be *highly likely* to use web content about the value and appreciation of water and campaign videos, while they would be *highly unlikely* to use campaign bill inserts
- Most respondents indicate their organizations would be *highly likely* to use:

- Web content about the value and appreciation of water
  - Campaign videos
- Most respondents indicate their organizations would be *somewhat likely* to use:
  - Campaign fact sheets
  - Campaign brochures
  - Campaign message platform
- Most respondents indicate that their organizations would be *highly unlikely* to use campaign bill inserts

**12. What outcome or outcomes would you want to achieve as a result of this greater water awareness?**

- Support for individual organization's projects and goals
  - Investment in infrastructure
  - Conservation
  - Rate increases
- Greater conservation, less water use
- Greater appreciation, more awareness, leading to more informed development of opinions and actions
  - Less extremism
- More balance between water uses
- Statewide cooperation
- More engagement in water issues

**13. How would you define the success of this plan?**

- Some answers were quantitative
  - Need a baseline to measure against
    - Specific percent have heard of campaign and have changed behavior
  - Specific decrease in water demand
  - Specific increase in knowledge of where water comes from
- Others more qualitative
  - Citizens taking action
  - Better success passing water related legislation
  - Reduced demand for ag to muni transfers
  - Support for watersense products and programs
- A roadmap that stakeholders agree on

## APPENDIX E

### Potential Funding Opportunities

Fundraising will be a critical element to developing a sustainable campaign. Significant funds will be required to build a large-scale, statewide campaign that truly has an impact on the way Coloradans think and feel about water. The leadership team will need to think creatively about funding in order to build a substantial budget that can support a campaign of this magnitude. Below are several funding options that should be considered. It is important to note that no direct contact has been made with any of these organizations to explore funding possibilities. Each has their unique requirements; further research will be required before pursuing any of these opportunities.

- **Foundations:** There seem to be relatively few local foundations that provide grants and funding that are aligned with the objectives of this campaign, but several national foundations could be a fit for the project. Many foundations only provide funding to non-profit organizations so if a new non-profit third-party group is created, the possibility of securing funding from a foundation may increase.

Foundations to evaluate include:

- Beim Foundation: Supports community-based environmental programs that foster sustainable water conservation. [www.beimfoundation.org/grant-guidelines.html](http://www.beimfoundation.org/grant-guidelines.html)
  - Community First Foundation: A Colorado-based foundation that offers grants to initiatives and organizations that strengthen lives in the Denver-Metro area; many of their causes have an environmental focus. [www.communityfirstfoundation.org](http://www.communityfirstfoundation.org)
  - Cedar Tree Foundation: Provides grants in the areas of environmental education, environmental health and sustainable agriculture. [www.cedartreefound.org/apply.html](http://www.cedartreefound.org/apply.html)
  - Harry Chapin foundation: Funds non-profit environmental and agriculture programs. [www.harrychapinfoundation.org/focus\\_focusandguidelines.php](http://www.harrychapinfoundation.org/focus_focusandguidelines.php)
  - The Lawrence Foundation: Provides grants to support environmental, education, human services and other causes. [www.thelawrencefoundation.org/grants/guidelines.php](http://www.thelawrencefoundation.org/grants/guidelines.php)
  - Patagonia: Funds organizations that identify and work on the root causes of environmental problems with a commitment to long-term change. [www.patagonia.com/us/patagonia.go?assetid=2942](http://www.patagonia.com/us/patagonia.go?assetid=2942)
  - The Schmidt Family Foundation: Supports efforts to help transform the world's environmental and energy practices while advancing "an increasingly intelligent relationship between human activity and the use of the world's natural resources." <http://theschmidt.org/site/grants/index.html#whatWeFund>
- **Grants:** There are several government agency grant programs that could be a good fit for this campaign. Several potential targets include:

- Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Legacy Grant Program: GOCO's Legacy Grant Program was created to help preserve Colorado's natural heritage for future generations and could be a fit for our campaign. The grants are typically "multi-year initiatives of regional or statewide importance to which GOCO makes multi-million dollar commitments." These initiatives aim to "preserve Colorado's land and water, enhance wildlife habitat, create state and local parks, construct trails, and help provide environmental education." GOCO states that these legacy projects "typically hinge upon strong partnerships between federal and state agencies, non-profit organizations, landowners and the private sector." [http://goco.org.s57353.gridserver.com/?page\\_id=84](http://goco.org.s57353.gridserver.com/?page_id=84)
- Environmental Protection Agency's Targeted Watershed Grant: The grant is intended to "encourage successful community-based approaches and management techniques to protect and restore the nation's watersheds." The EPA recently awarded a \$600,000 targeted watershed grant to the River Network. This grant may require a focus on specific watersheds, but it could still be a potential fit for this campaign. [www.water.epa.gov/grants\\_funding/twg](http://www.water.epa.gov/grants_funding/twg)
- Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Grant: Reclamation provides 50/50 cost share funding for projects that "seek to conserve and use water more efficiently, increase the use of renewable energy, protect endangered species, or facilitate water markets." [www.usbr.gov/WaterSMART/watersmartgrants.html](http://www.usbr.gov/WaterSMART/watersmartgrants.html)
- Bureau of Reclamation's System Optimization Review Grant: This grant provides funding to states, water providers and other organizations that want to conduct a broad review of a regional system with a focus on improving efficiency and operations. The grant specifies that the review should include information and data gathering, as well as determining future goals, priorities and an action plan. This grant could be a good fit for the initial research effort that will be conducted at the campaign's outset, but it likely would not work as a funding source for campaign implementation. [www.usbr.gov/WaterSMART/system.html](http://www.usbr.gov/WaterSMART/system.html)
- **Program Partners:** There are many water-related groups throughout the state that stand to benefit from this communications campaign (e.g., water providers, water districts, environmental groups, other water entities). These entities may have discretionary funding that could be designated to the campaign, particularly if the value of the effort can be demonstrated in terms of enhancing stakeholder buy-in for water projects, increasing conservation, etc. A good starting point would be to approach all of the groups involved in the Value of Water Subcommittee, followed by any other relevant water-related entities statewide, to see if any funding opportunities are available.
- **Corporate Partners:** Some of the campaigns that were evaluated received funding from engineering firms and other corporate entities involved in water-related issues. Corporate sponsorships should be considered for this campaign.
- **Local Governments:** Many of the campaigns that were analyzed received funding from local governments, including cities, counties, towns, authorities. Local entities across the state could be solicited as potential funding partners for this campaign.
- **Membership-Based Approach:** Another model to consider is a membership-based funding approach. For example, the *California Water Awareness Campaign* solicits

businesses and water-related agencies to become members. They have differing levels of suggested contribution amounts, depending on the entity, and the annual dues are used to help fund the program.

- **State Agencies:** CWCB could collaborate with other state agencies that have relevance to the project's cause to see if funds are available to help support the campaign. Agencies to consider include:
  - Colorado Department of Agriculture
  - Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
  - Colorado Department of Wildlife
  - Colorado Division of Water Resources
  - Colorado State Parks
- **State General Fund:** At the present time, it may be difficult to procure money from this fund due to budget constraints, but it may be a potential source of campaign funding in the future.

Additionally, in-kind donations could help with some of the campaign's costs. Other campaigns successfully leveraged in-kind donations from the following entities:

- **Media Sponsors:** Engaging a television media sponsor could help to significantly reduce the costs associated with campaign promotion, advertising production and media buys. For example, the San Diego *Think Blue* campaign secured a local ABC affiliate to donate over \$1 million in campaign design, production and promotion services. The station ran a year-long series of 30- and 60-second promotional messages, as well as PSAs and advertising spots. Print and radio sponsors could also be engaged to run our campaign PSAs free of charge.
- **Local Universities:** Several successful campaigns have engaged the help of local universities to assist with research, website development or other campaign activities. As various needs arise during the campaign research and implementation, the leadership team should consider approaching local colleges and universities to see if they would be willing to donate their time and expertise.